



State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
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Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**GOVERNOR JOHN C. BROWN**  
**(1827-1889)**  
**PAPERS**  
**1871-1875**

**GP 23**

*Processed by:*

Elbert Watson  
Archival Technical Services

Date Completed: 1964

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The official papers of Governor John C. Brown, 1871-1875, deal with many subjects of significant interest to researchers studying Tennessee during this period of Reconstruction. One quickly notes the undisguised relief of citizens over this regaining control of the reins of state government through the election of Brown, a former Whig but now a staunch Democrat. Typical statements appear like these: (1) "I am a Democrat and voted for you and the whole of the Democratic ticket...Any party who is in favor of putting negroes on an equality with white people I have no use for: (2) "Mr. Hill served with honor and fidelity to the Confederate States through the late war".

Many applicants for appointive offices apparently believed that past encounters with Radical candidates automatically enhanced their chances for securing the desired position. Knoxville's John H. Crozier, for instance, on November 24, 1871, applied for the position of Attorney General for the Criminal Court of Knox County. As a Conservative, he reminded Brown that earlier a convention had disqualified him (Crozier) as a candidate, favoring instead Colonel Thornburg, a Radical. "This prejudice", he wrote, "of the union element against rebels and the sons of prominent will exist just as long as union men are benefited by it, and they will never surrender it until their eyes are accustomed to seeing rebels in office, and are made to understand that, with peace, all prejudices on account of the war must be buried". Another writer, James Mitchell of Dandridge, on December 8, 1871, recommended James P. Swann to the office of Supreme Judge, but slightly altered his evaluation because Swann had been a union man. Despite this handicap, Mitchell knew him to be "honest and firm. When the carpet-baggers were overrunning the country, he was the first man here in East Tennessee that took an open stand against them, and did more to put that set of swindlers down than any ten men in the country".

Radical Governor Brownlow's name was mentioned only occasionally throughout the collection. One interesting, though not particularly significant, letter from P. N. Vignolles sought to collect a claim dating back to 1867 when he made sketches for a statue of Abraham Lincoln to be erected on the Capitol grounds. Across the years, Brownlow, now a United States Senator, had failed to acknowledge the bill, so now Vignolles appealed to Brown.

Foreign immigration, especially that of the Swiss into Grundy County, is covered extensively in the Brown Papers. The largest portion of this correspondence appears shortly after Dr. Wilh Joos of Switzerland visited Tennessee in the early 1870's to submit a proposition for obtaining suitable land for the immigrants. C. W. Charlton, Commissioner for Immigration for East Tennessee, pushed this project with considerable vigor. For some reason not brought out in the correspondence, Brown did not evince the enthusiasm which Charlton thought necessary to successfully accomplish the program, so the latter encouraged him to clearly state his position so the masses could understand. He also stressed that Radicals were attempting to misrepresent the governor because of his silence. Although defending himself against being unfriendly to Swiss immigration,

Governor Brown wrote: "I admit that I have not made speeches every Saturday at the Market House and on the Street Corners to keep the subject before the people. Perhaps my patriotism might have been stimulated a little had I been fortunate enough to own a few thousand acres of wild poor lands that could not be sold to Native Americans nor to any one else except some adventurer who was colonizing a party of foreigners to make all he could out of them".

The deplorable murder of J.U. Baur, a Swiss native and founder of the Gruetli settlement, also appears in the correspondence of John Hitz, Consular General of Switzerland residing in Washington. Hitz demanded "prompt punishment of the offenders", believing that this alone would "in a measure mitigate the effects and reestablish to some extent a feeling of security". If the murderers were not brought to justice, he wrote, then "all of the advantages of climate, soil and location of Tennessee will henceforth avail nothing in securing" Swiss immigrants.

John Williams in 1871 gave a personal insight into the character of former president Andrew Johnson, following a speech in which Governor Brown had apparently made some unkind references to Johnson. Williams believed that Johnson planned a reply, but had restrained himself thus far. "Mr. Johnson is not a malignant man, as many suppose him to be", Williams wrote. "On the contrary, is forgiving in a high degree, and is willing to yield to others in whom he has confidence".

Aside from these major considerations, the collection encompasses a variety of important subjects. In 1873, James Glover, Superintendent of the Capitol, supplied statistics and gave intimate details of the edifice's appearance and furnishings. One writer, identified only as the "Louisiana Tiger", an inmate at the state prison, told of the intolerable conditions which he and his fellow prisoners experienced there. Apparently aged, the "Tiger's" style of writing and word usage are unusually good. Indications are that he had spent many years in his confinement. Students of Judge T.A.R. Nelson, the unionist, will be interested in his correspondence offering his resignation, one reason being the forthcoming trial of his son who was accused of murdering former Confederate General James Clanton.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

### **Governor John C. Brown**

- 1827 Born in Giles County, Tennessee January 6. His parents Duncan Brown and Margaret Smith Brown, both of Scotch-Irish descent. He was a brother of Governor Neil S. Brown.
- 1846 Graduated from Jackson College at Columbia, Tennessee.
- 1848 Began the practice of law.
- 1860 Enlisted in the Confederate Army as a private, later in the war advanced to a Major-General.
- 1869 Elected to the Legislature.
- 1870 Elected Governor of Tennessee.
- 1872 Re-elected Governor of Tennessee.
- 1889 August 17, Died at Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee.

## **SUBJECT INDEX**

Listed below are notable subjects included in this collection. In some instances, the subject is brought out in only one letter, but the information contained therein is significant enough to warrant its inclusion in the index. When no date is given, the researcher can expect to find the subject mentioned throughout the collection.

1. American Association for Cheap Transportation, annual meeting, Richmond, Virginia, 1874.
2. Atlantic and Great Western Canal, 1873.
3. Boundary Line between Tennessee, Mississippi and Virginia, 1872.
4. Commander M. F. Maury's death, 1873.
5. Conservatives vs. Radicals politics.
6. Conservatives regain control of the state government.
7. East Tennessee University.
8. Grundy County Agriculture Society, 1873.
9. Immigration from foreign countries, particularly Swiss.
10. Improvements of the Ohio River and its tributaries, 1873.
11. Knoxville Iron Company, 1874.
12. Memphis and Charleston Railroad, 1873.
13. Oshea diamond robbery, 1874.
14. Public School education.
15. Railroad companies and construction.
16. Removal of the United States Capitol from Washington, 1874.
17. State Capitol, description, 1873.
18. State Penitentiary, description, internal conditions.
19. Tennessee Hospital for the Insane, 1874.
20. Tennessee School for the blind, 1873.
21. Turnpike Roads.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Microfilm Roll #1

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#### Box 1

1	Correspondence – Brown. John C.	1871-1872
2	Correspondence – Brown. John C.	1983-1874
3	Correspondence – General-Alexander-Gratz	1871
4	Correspondence – General-Harbison-Richardson	1871
5	Correspondence – General-Senter-Young	1871
6	Correspondence – General-Adams-Curry	1872
7	Correspondence – General-Dewitt-Gray	1872
8	Correspondence – General-Hall-Judson	1872
9	Correspondence – General-Kelley-Morgan	1872
10	Correspondence – General-Netherland-Tyler	1872
11	Correspondence – General-Van Buren-Yerger	1872

#### Box 2

1	Miscellaneous Correspondence – Alexander-Young	1871-1872
2	Correspondence – Martin, Andrew B., re: Condition of accounts between Tennessee and Federal Government	1872
3	Miscellaneous Correspondence, re: Weights and Measures	1872-1873
4	Correspondence – General-Abraham-Cutts	1873
5	Correspondence – General-Davis-Greenfield	1873
6	Correspondence – General-Hacker-Judson	1873

### Microfilm Roll #2

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7	Correspondence – General-Kallan-Nunn	1873
8	Correspondence – General-Parens-Rowell	1873

#### Box 3

1	Correspondence – General-Sauls-Tobias	1873
2	Correspondence – General-Vaughn-Young	1873
3	Miscellaneous Correspondence – Allen-Wright	1873
4	Correspondence – General-Adams-Brown	1874
5	Correspondence – General-Cage-Grinstead	1874-1875
6	Correspondence – General-Day, G.W., re: Site for Insane Hospital	1874
7	Correspondence – General-Hacker-Humes	1874
8	Correspondence – General-Ingles-Love	1874
9	Correspondence – General-Maham-Murphy	1874

**Box 4**

1	Correspondence – General-Nelson-Stykes	1874
2	Correspondence – General-Taylor-Updyke	1874
3	Correspondence – General-Welcker-Wright	1874
4	Correspondence – General-Brown-White	1875
5	Correspondence – General-Beaty-Roberson	n.d.
6	Miscellaneous Correspondence – Adams-Woodard	1874-1875
7	Miscellaneous Material	1871-1875

**Microfilm Roll #3**

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8	Miscellaneous Correspondence – unsigned	n.d.
9	Petitions	1871-1875
10	Certifications, Election	1872-1873
11	Correspondence – Cooper, Judge William Frierson (addition, 1992)	1874

**Box 5**

1	Letter Books (2)	1871-1872
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**Microfilm Roll #4**

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2	Letter Books (2)	1872-1874
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**Box 6**

1	Special Subject, re: Committee to investigate the affairs of the Bank of Tennessee and accounts of Samuel Watson, Trustee, etc.	1874
2	Special Subject, re: Consolidation of Railroads	1874
3	Messages to the State Legislature	
4	Miscellaneous Material	1870-1872
5	Miscellaneous Material	1873-1875

**Microfilm Roll #5**

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6	Requisitions	1872-1874
7	Rewards	1872-1875
8	Prison recommendations for Pardons	1874

**Box 7**

1	Petitions for Pardons	1871
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**Microfilm Roll #6**

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2	Petitions for Pardons, A-K	1872
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**Box 8**

1	Petitions for Pardons, L-Y	1872
2	Petitions for Pardons, A-H	1873

**Microfilm Roll #7**

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**Box 9**

1	Petitions for Pardons, E-G	1873
2	Petitions for Pardons, H-M	1873

**Box 10**

1	Petitions for Pardons, N-Z	1873
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**Microfilm Roll #8**

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2	Petitions for Pardons, A-G	1874
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**Box 11**

1	Petitions for Pardons, H-P	1874
2	Petitions for Pardons, R-Z	1874

**Microfilm Roll #9**

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3	Petitions for Pardons	1875
4	Pardons	1871-1873
5	Pardons	1874-1875



## NAME INDEX

This index contains names of persons holding influential positions during the period. In some instances, however, correspondence is included because the content is important enough to warrant attention in the index. The figures in the parenthesis immediately following each name denote the total number of letters in the folder from that person. The identification of the writer and the site from where the letters were written are included whenever possible.

### **Box 1, Folder 3, 1871**

Don Cameron, (1), Publisher of Whig and Tribune, Jackson, Tennessee.  
C.W. Charlton (1), Commissioner of Immigration for East Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.  
A.S. Colyar (2), President Tennessee Immigration, Labor and Real Estate Association, Nashville, Tennessee.  
John H. Crozier (1), Attorney, Knoxville, Tennessee.  
John H. Crozier Jr. (1), Attorney, Knoxville, Tennessee.

### **Box 1, Folder 4, 1871**

Isham G. Harris (1), Former Governor of Tennessee, Memphis.  
A.O.P. Nicholson (1), Former Congressman from Tennessee, Columbia.  
Thomas A.R. Nelson (4), Judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, Knoxville.

### **Box 1, Folder 3, 1871**

D.W.C. Senter (1), Former Governor of Tennessee, Knoxville.  
Louisiana Tiger (2), Convict at State Prison, Nashville.  
Robertson Topp (1), Prominent Businessman in Memphis, Nashville.

### **Box 1, Folder 6, 1872**

A.G. Adams (1), Merchant, Nashville, Tennessee.  
John W. Belknap (2), Secretary of War, Washington D.C.  
W. Matt Brown (5), Warden Tennessee Penitentiary, Nashville, Tennessee.  
Neill S. Brown (1), Former Governor of Tennessee, Nashville.  
C.W. Charlton (9), Commissioner of Immigration, Knoxville.

### **Box 1, Folder 7, 1872**

W.B. Donoho (5), Chairman, Board of Immigration, Memphis.

### **Box 1, Folder 8, 1872**

J.B. Heiskell (10), Attorney General of Tennessee, Nashville.  
Thomas W. Humes (5), President East Tennessee University, Knoxville.

**Box 1, Folder 9, 1872**

John Moffat (2), Commissioner of Immigration, Middle Tennessee, Nashville.

**Box 1, Folder 10, 1872**

James D. Porter (3), Governor of Tennessee, 1875-1879, Huntington, Tennessee.

**Box 2, Folder 4, 1873**

A.G. Adams (2), Nashville Merchant, Nashville, Tennessee.

P.R. Athy (3), Chief of Police, Memphis, Tennessee.

W. Matt Brown (7), Warden, Tennessee Penitentiary, Nashville, Tennessee.

Neill S. Brown (1), Former Governor of Tennessee, Nashville, Tennessee.

A. Caldwell (5), Attorney, Knoxville, Tennessee.

C.W. Charlton (2), Commissioner of Immigration, East Tennessee, Knoxville.

**Box 2, Folder 5, 1873**

W.B. Donoho (7), Chairman Board of Immigration, Tennessee, Memphis.

James Glover (2), Superintendent of the Capitol, Nashville.

Hamilton Fish (1), Secretary of State, Washington D.C.

**Box 2, Folder 6, 1873**

J.B. Heiskell (7), Attorney General, State of Tennessee, Memphis.

Jerome Hill (3), Director, Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company, Memphis.

Thomas W. Humes (3), President East Tennessee University, Knoxville.

**Box 2, Folder 7, 1873**

William P. Martin (4), Judge, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, Columbia.

**Box 2, Folder 8, 1873**

Balie Peyton (1), Tennessee Congressman, Gallatin, Tennessee.

James D. Porter (1), Governor of Tennessee, 1875-1879, Paris, Tennessee.

John D. Rather (5), President Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company,  
Tuscumbia, Alabama.

**Box 3, Folder 1, 1873**

Horatio Seymour (1), Governor of New York, Albany, New York.

A.D. Shepard (9), Treasurer, National Bank Note Co., New York.

James M. Smith (3), Governor of Georgia, Atlanta.

J.M. Sturtevant (1), Superintendent Tennessee School for the Blind, Nashville, Tennessee.

**Box 3, Folder 2, 1873**

Silas Woodson (2), Governor of Missouri, Jefferson, Missouri.

W.M Wright (8), Superintendent, Tennessee Penitentiary, Nashville.

**Box 3, Folder 4, 1874**

P.R. Athy (3), Chief of Police, Memphis, Tennessee.

John W. Belknap (1), Secretary of War, Washington D.C.

John L. Beveridge (2), Governor of Illinois, Springfield, Illinois.

W. Matt Brown (26), Warden Tennessee Penitentiary, Nashville, Tennessee.

**Box 3, Folder 5, 1874**

A. Caldwell (5), Attorney, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Hamilton Fish (1), Secretary of State, Washington D.C.

**Box 3, Folder 7, 1874**

S. R. Hamill (1), Attorney at Law and Solicitor, Washington D.C.

J.B. Heiskell (5), Attorney General, State of Tennessee, Memphis, Tennessee.

John Hitz (1), Consul General of Switzerland, Washington D.C.

Thomas W. Humes (4), President East Tennessee University.

**Box 3, Folder 9, 1874**

A.S. Marks (4), Governor of Tennessee 1879-1881, Winchester, Tennessee.

William P. Martin (3), Judge, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, Columbia, Tennessee.

George H. Morgan (5), Attorney General, 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit, Hartsville.

**Box 4, Folder 1, 1874**

A.O.P. Nicholson (3), Former Congressman from Tennessee, Columbia, Tennessee.

John D. Rather (4), President Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company,  
Tuscumbia, Alabama.

A.D. Shepard, (5) Treasurer, National Bank Note Company, New York.